

# Chapter 3

## Communities Meeting the Need for After-School Activities

---

The following after-school programs incorporate many of the components of effective programs discussed in the previous chapter. They are examples of how local communities across the country are meeting the need for safe and smart after-school activities that serve young people of all ages. These examples are by no means exhaustive; they are intended to illustrate the kinds of after-school programs that are working in schools and communities. The contact listed with each example has agreed to provide more information upon request.

As the number of after-school programs continues to grow, more and more programs are intentionally linking regular school day learning with the after-school experience. Examples of linkages include integrating curriculum, sharing information about homework assignments and individual children, staffing programs with school day teachers and community-based providers, and holding special events specifically for building relationships between school day and after-school staff. By addressing the needs of and tapping resources within local communities, practices like these are providing broad learning and enrichment opportunities to children in safe and drug-free environments.

**Alum Rock Union Elementary School District**  
**21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center (CLC)**  
**San Jose, California**  
**Contact: Frank Castilla, 408-924-2571**

The CLC program was developed to provide learning opportunities for middle school students to develop self-esteem through academic achievement. Through a collaboration between Alum Rock School District, San Jose State University, and San Jose Museum of Art, students participate in academic, enrichment, and motivational opportunities. The program specifically targets children who demonstrate a need for additional academic help. English is the second language of many participants. In addition to the CLC program, a district-wide after-school program is available to students.

The CLC program is in three middle schools (Sheppard, Ocala, and Pala) and available at each from Monday through Thursday from 2:30 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. During that time, students participate in mathematics and language arts instruction and tutoring from a highly trained staff. In addition students participate in technology activities, group-problem-solving activities, and a community-based arts program provided by the San Jose Museum of Art. At two of the three sites, the program also includes a close connection to the regular academic day through a sixth period CLC class.

Each of the three centers is has a highly trained staff consisting of a site coordinator who is a certified teacher, two other certified teachers, a lead intern who is a San Jose State University student, and a tutorial staff of four to six interns who are high school and college students. All staff participate in an extensive training program provided by the Collaborative Training Institute (CTI), which operates out of the San Jose State University Pre-College Programs office. The CTI is certified by the College Reading and Learning Association's International Tutor Training Certification Program. Staff attend 100 hours of training a year.

Although it is too early to determine the effect of the program on students, certain indicators of success have been identified by this CLC program and include significant gains made in math and language arts achievement, increased enrollment in algebra and geometry upon entering the ninth grade, increased use of expanded library hours, and demonstrated improved study skills.

**Boys and Girls Club of Tahlequah, Inc.  
Tahlequah, Oklahoma  
Contact: Bertha Alsenay, 918-456-6888**

The mission of the Boys and Girls Club ("The Club") in rural Tahlequah, Oklahoma, is to help young people acquire the attitudes, behaviors, and skills necessary to succeed as adults. To this end, The Club promotes health, social skills, education, character, and leadership development for children. During the school year, The Club operates after-school programs at two Tahlequah elementary schools and a junior high school from the end of the school day until 6:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. In

addition, one night a week is family night where parents can work with their children on the computers. Every day approximately 350 children receive a snack, participate in homework and tutorial assistance, and then have a choice of recreational activities, computer club, or other special activities, including field trips and guest speakers on a variety of topics such as drug abuse, culture, academia, and law enforcement. The after-school and summer programs are staffed by certified teachers, coordinators, college students who are education majors, and volunteer high school students.

During the eight-week, full-day summer program, over 550 youth ages 10-15 arrive at 9:00 a.m. at Northeastern State University for the organized sports program. In the afternoon, they participate in a wide variety of activities run by The Club that include "Smart Moves," an alcohol prevention program, computer reading labs, environmental education classes, cultural arts and crafts, golfing, field trips, nature walks, math, reading, science, enrichment courses and sports activities ranging from basketball and volleyball to swimming. Opportunities for children and youth to lead are woven throughout all the programs.

The most startling "before and after" comparison has been the almost immediate, visible improvement in both academic performance and social skills. According to Billie Jordan, principal of Central Elementary School, "Teachers have reported that members have improved attitudes toward school because their improved grades led to improved self-esteem."

**Boys Harbor: The Harbor for Boys and Girls**  
**East Harlem, New York**  
**Contact: Gloria Schwartz, 212-427-2244 ext 515**

The Harbor is an urban community-based program located in East Harlem. It was founded in 1937 as a summer camp for disadvantaged youth. Now it is a multifaceted, education-oriented agency that offers over 4,000 children ages 5-21 a range of services that combines recreation, education, and guidance through holistic programming. The after-school component runs 3-6 p.m. every weekday and all day on school holidays and summer for elementary and junior high youth and serves on average 400 children and youths. The program focuses on supporting and reinforcing academic skills introduced in school, developing debating and critical thinking skills, conflict resolution, and continued support in the process of preparing for the future. Activities include explorations in science and the arts, sports, foreign languages, photography, filmmaking, computer workshops, ceramics, and cooking and nutrition.

One of the keys to sustaining the Harbor has been ongoing staff development and support. In the last five years, a full-time literacy specialist and resource development specialist were hired to help teaching staff develop thematic plans for encouraging and incorporating developmentally appropriate literacy practices into the various after-school activities. Students are often engaged in summer or school-year-long literacy projects, researching and learning such topics as world leaders, themes of the 20th century, and famous authors. Students choose to use forms such as art, poetry,

videos, and plays to present their learnings to other students at the Harbor. In addition, a literacy clinic is available to students through referrals and ongoing formal and informal assessments by staff and teachers at the schools. The staff at the Harbor maintains regular contact with the schools through teachers and parents.

**Community Collaboration for Education Enrichment (CCEE)**  
**YMCA of San Antonio & The Hill Country, Hawthorne Elementary School**  
**San Antonio, Texas**  
**Contact: Sally Luedke, 210-246-9622**

The CCEE model blends the resources, expertise, and services of the YMCA, numerous local youth service agencies, the public schools, and the community to deliver services to at-risk youth and their families. The YMCA, the local school districts, the City of San Antonio, the Texas Education Agency, numerous local foundations, and federal funding come together to support and maintain services. CCEE is in 17 school districts in San Antonio. CCEE is based on the philosophy that the neighborhood school is the focal point of the community, reflecting the community's values and answering its needs. Program services are based on consultation with school faculty, collaborative partners, students, parents, and community leaders. Current services include: child care for pre-k and school-age children, care for infants and toddlers of teenage parents/students, tutoring, mentoring, youth service learning, youth and government, youth employment readiness, experiential education, academic enrichment and support services, fine arts, outdoor education, youth sports, intergenerational

activities, and family/community involvement programs.

At the Hawthorne Elementary School Campus, YMCA collaboration with the community has been key to the success of the program. The staff nurtures and maintains partnerships with corporations, neighborhood businesses, universities, and human service agencies in delivering services to children and their families. With a permanent office within the school building, the program is staffed by a YMCA program director, aides, support staff, interns, parents, and volunteers. YMCA staff members attend school-day staff meetings to coordinate curriculum and activities. The collaboration between school-day and YMCA staff has created a seamless system where activities throughout the day adhere to a core knowledge curriculum designed by Trinity University.

The Campus YMCA is one of several strategic school improvement initiatives underway at Hawthorne. Together, as a coordinated effort, these initiatives have significantly improved attendance, attitude, and academic achievement. Attendance has improved from 63rd in the San Antonio Independent School District to 12th among elementary schools. Parent and community involvement has improved dramatically. The physical, emotional, and spiritual health of students in the program shows excellent progress, and student achievement has improved significantly as have standardized test scores.

**Hamilton County Board of Education,  
21st CCLC  
Lights On!  
Chattanooga, Tennessee  
Contact: Anne McGintis, 423-209-8595**

Through 25-member task forces created for each school and consisting of parents, neighborhood representatives, bankers, politicians, business people, ministers, and other community leaders, The Hamilton County Board of Education established 21st Century Community Learning Centers at three elementary and two middle schools. Approximately 500 children participate in enriching learning opportunities provided by parents who are involved as volunteers and a network of creative partnerships (YMCA, Girls Inc., Ballet Tennessee, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, Chattanooga State University, Multiple Museums, The Hamilton County Health Department). Together, these partners help the community strengthen families, improve parents' capacity to earn income, demonstrate the value of education to children, provide a safe haven for children, and guide the healthy development of children.

The centers operate after school and during summers with several providing before-school programs as well. Each center offers homework assistance and tutoring, recreation and athletics, art and music programs, and cultural outings for children. Students take math and language arts, and then select from electives such as art, ballet, drama, foreign language, computers, guidance counseling, youth leadership, and cooking. The YMCA provides a wellness program that includes activities such as kickboxing, aerobics, spinning, weightlifting, volleyball, swimming, and walking. Lights On! staff members have

found that linking actual life experiences to a lesson learned during the school day is an effective way to keep children engaged and enthused about learning, and feeling good about themselves. In addition, parenting programs, job placement and job skill services, English as a second language (ESL) courses, health awareness, and adult basic education services are available to adults. As part of the health awareness program, The Hamilton County Health Department also provides health risk assessments to parents and families.

According to Anne McGintis, the school district's coordinator for parent, school, and community involvement and Lights On! project director, "Kids in Lights On! are missing fewer days of school. They fight less. They're excited about learning. Education is key to breaking the cycle of poverty, and we think we're making progress. The community is collaborating with us."

**Lake County Teen Connection  
After-School Program, 21st CCLC  
Upper Lake, California  
Contact: Shannon Smith, 707-279-0880**

As a result of a 21st CCLC grant, five after-school programs in rural Lake County have been in operation since 1998. Middle school students around the county participate in enriching learning opportunities from the moment the school day is over until 6:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Each site is staffed by two core staff members plus two high school students who serve as tutors. Each program begins the afternoon with an hour of homework completion and academic skill building, followed by an enrichment hour offering a broad range of

learning opportunities structured as 6- to 10-week club sessions. Examples of clubs include cooking, photography, science, crafts, and clay. Once a week, the life skills instructor spends time with students on topics such as peer relationships, team building, hygiene, finances, and health and nutrition. On Thursday of each week, students work on their community service projects such as coat drives, campus clean-ups, participating in community events, and visits to retirement homes. The last hour of the program is recreational where students have the opportunity to hang out with friends or participate in structured activities, or spend time outdoors as weather permits. One night a week is teen activity night when the gyms are open for structured activities for all children. During the summer, a six-week recreational after-school program is offered in conjunction with the summer school.

After the first year of operation, evaluation results indicated an increase in overall student grade averages, and decreases in disciplinary referrals, detentions and suspensions of students in the program. Staff report that students are turning homework in on a regular basis, making new friends, and having fun. Staff also report that school-day teachers are more and more supportive and many are interested in donating time or become involved in the program as tutors or advisors.



**Leadership, Education and Athletics in Partnership (LEAP)**  
**New Haven, Connecticut**  
**Contact: Karen Weis, 203-773-0770**

LEAP is a year-around academic and social enrichment program for nearly 1,200 urban children ages 7-14 in five cities in Connecticut: New Haven, Hartford, New London, Waterbury, and Bridgeport. LEAP is specifically designed to improve the academic and social circumstances of children ages 7-14, as well as of the teens and young adults ages 16-25 who serve as counselors and are intensively trained as mentors and tutors. As part of LEAP's multitiered mentoring system, the counselors are themselves mentored to improve their academic performance, graduate from high school and attend college. LEAP is one of the largest youth employers in Connecticut, has one of the most extensive community-based computer learning centers, and has developed age-specific curriculum guides.

During the school year, after-school programs run from 3 to 6:30 p.m., Monday-Thursday, with Friday as full-day staff development days. Programs are both school and community based. A typical afternoon during the academic year begins with homework club, which maintains a ratio of four children per counselor. This is followed by DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) Time where counselors plan activities to engage children in reading for enjoyment and enrichment. During the last two hours of the program, eight children and two counselors rotate through a schedule of weekly activities that include educational activities (for example, read-alouds and journal writing), resource activities (for example, workshops at museums, science

and art centers) and site-based initiatives (for example, arts and crafts, athletics, leadership, personal exploration).

Each summer, college student counselors move into children's communities and offer around-the-clock presence in children's home environments. The summer program runs from 9 to 6 p.m. daily and includes breakfast, lunch, a morning meeting, a reading-based curriculum, recreation and time to hang out, and resource activities. Children often return to counselors' apartments at night for movies, sleepovers, games, and other activities. During the summer, weeklong educational field trips take students to cities such as Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Toronto, and Baltimore.

Evaluation results indicate that children who participate in LEAP improve their social, motivational, and behavioral skills, and maintain academic proficiency over the summer. Also, LEAP has generated parent support and involvement in their children's education and graduated 100 percent of inner-city high school student mentors.

**Proyecto Sano y Salvo (Project Safe and Sound), 21st CCLC**  
**Tucson, Arizona**  
**Contact: Barbara Benton, 520-617-7434**

With a 21st CCLC grant, Proyecto Sano y Salvo opened its doors in September 1998 at three Tucson, Arizona, middle schools. Each middle school has an advisory committee composed of teachers, school administrators, parents and community members who collaborate to design after-school enrichment courses that are aligned with the school's core curriculum. The

after-school programs are open five days a week from the end of the school day until 6:30 p.m. and at least one Saturday a month for family activities. Each program has an after-school coordinator with courses taught by teachers, community members, and students from the University of Arizona and Pima Community College. The colleges also provide tutors.

During an afternoon, youth have the opportunity to choose from a number of courses focused on math and science, fine arts, computer technology and social development. Examples of courses include a science-based curriculum designed by the University of Arizona; Boot Camp provided by officers from the Davis Monahan Air Force Base that teaches youth respect, discipline, physical conditioning, social awareness and teamwork; and a class in African American Studies offered by the Tucson Urban League. After-school students have also built model airplanes, a model biosphere, learned about automobiles, and solved a crime using DNA.

The summer program consists of a morning rotation of reading, language arts, math and science classes and afternoon electives such as arts, music, marine biology, folk dancing and drama. Youth keep journals for each project.

Proyecto Sano y Salvo has also begun implementing a program improvement and evaluation model. Building off a sophisticated data collection and entry system that already exists through the Tucson Unified School District, program and evaluation staff have designed instruments and templates, scanable surveys, and a continuous feedback system for program-level data collection and input, and analysis and feedback. Early observations

of the program by staff point to improved school attendance as a result of the after-school program, as well as lower suspension and adjudication.

**Summer Transitions**  
**Little Rock, Arkansas**  
**Contact: Don Crary, 501-374-1011**

New Futures for Youth in Little Rock, Arkansas, in partnership with the Center for Human Resources at Brandeis University, piloted Summer Transitions, a capacity-building effort to improve school and career options (with an emphasis on math and science) for youth. The initiative strives to integrate lessons learned from education reform, workforce preparation, and positive community youth development, and emphasizes an asset-based approach to learning and the importance of strong youth-adult partnerships. Funded by DeWitt-Wallace Reader's Digest, the project-based learning efforts focus on the following specific outcomes: 1) increasing learning gains among youth at high risk of falling behind in school; 2) improving their knowledge of the connections between school and work; 3) enhancing their understanding of opportunities in the labor market, including education fields; and 4) providing local businesses with a model that demonstrates the role they can play.

During the summer of 1999, four sites in urban Little Rock participated in the Summer Transitions initiative. The initiative focused on incoming ninth-grade youth who were behind in math and science. A community-based after-school provider and a schoolteacher formed a team at each site to coordinate the six-week full-day summer program. Projects at the sites included researching, designing, and

constructing a community-based science lab, pool tables, and portable greenhouses.

At the end of the six-week summer initiative, one site reported significant increases in math scores. Saying, “We want this all summer and during the school year!” students reported they not only felt good about increasing their math and science scores but also learned a great deal about how to get along with others and gained problem-solving and decision-making skills. Participating teachers and community-based organization providers plan to continue ongoing and supportive relationships to link and expand learning opportunities throughout the day. During the next two years of planning for full-scale implementation, the initiative will focus on building a curriculum to infuse learning and enrichment and work with the same students and engage additional students.

**The Metropolitan Career and Technical Center (The Met)**  
**Providence, Rhode Island**  
**Contact: Eliot Washor, 401-277-5046**

The Met is a new kind of public high school that integrates academic and applied learning throughout the day from 7:00 a.m. to late in the evening as well as some weekends. A lab school for the Rhode Island Department of Education, the Met opened its doors in the fall of 1996 with 52 students and grew to 100 by adding a new freshman class in the fall of 1997. It currently has two schools with plans to build a campus with eight small schools with 100 students per school by the year 2002. Students are culturally diverse with 75 percent from inner-city Providence and 25 percent from the rest of Rhode Island.

The Met is a small school community designed to educate one student at a time with a student/teacher ratio of 13:1. Each student’s interests, background, needs, and learning styles determine the activities projects, and priorities that make up his or her individualized curriculum. Each student has a personalized learning plan developed by the student and his or her teacher, parent/guardian, and internship mentor. The learning plan is based on the learning goals of the Met: empirical reasoning, symbolic/quantitative reasoning, communication, social reasoning, and personal qualities. AmeriCorp members are also involved as advisors and coordinate community engagement. Met students prepare for citizenship, work, and future education by engaging in real work in area businesses, community-based organizations, and in personal or group projects. Students spend each day determined by their interests, needs, and learning styles in a manner designed to help them reach their highest possible standards of learning.

Student projects are evaluated by their teachers, parents, and mentors through presentations, observations, journals and other writing, standardized tests, and teachers’ narratives on students’ learning progress. Family engagement is a key part of the community—students and their parents/guardians attend 11 meetings a year, plus weekly town meetings to discuss various issues. An example of successful projects by students includes the creation of Youth in Action, a nonprofit, incorporated agency with 25 youth and adult board members. Two students who graduated in spring 2000 began this project in their freshman year. Students also take college courses, and participate in meaningful summer experiences through work, travel, study or internships.